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LETTER DATED 18 NOVEMBER 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 27 September to 26 October 1999.

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. Over the reporting period (27 September-26 October), troops of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) continued their deployment into the theatre. As at 26 October, there were 49,517 troops in place. Seventeen countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have now completed their deployments. On 8 October, General Dr. Klaus Reinhardt assumed command of KFOR from the outgoing commander, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson.

2. Argentina, Azerbaijan and Georgia completed their deployments over the reporting period. Russian deployment into the town of Orahovac continues to be hampered by ongoing demonstrations and roadblocks set up around the town by various groups of ethnic Albanians. Efforts to resolve the problem are ongoing.

Security

3. Overall, criminal and violent acts decreased over the period. Acts of aggression against KFOR personnel decreased significantly, despite an upswing in the second week of October, which coincided with an upswing in attacks by Kosovar Albanians against Kosovar Serbs. In the period since then, attacks on Kosovar Serbs decreased, although attacks on Serb property, including arson attacks, continued. The protection of minorities remains one of the highest priorities for KFOR. Over 50 per cent of KFOR personnel are involved. KFOR troops provide a permanent presence in Serb towns, villages, neighbourhoods and even in individual houses. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas to provide security and instil a feeling of confidence in the community. Ethnic tension remains, however, particularly in areas where Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians live in close proximity, as is the case in Kosovska Mitrovica, where there were a number of clashes over the reporting period.

4. On 28 September, a grenade attack near the market place in Kosovo Polje resulted in the death of two Kosovar Serbs and serious injuries to 50 others. In the immediate aftermath, additional KFOR troops and platoons from the Multinational Specialized Unit deployed into the town. KFOR will continue to seek to improve the security situation, to protect all the communities in Kosovo, and to deter violence.

5. KFOR continues to work closely with the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre and other demining organizations, and is currently conducting mine awareness training in an effort to teach the local population of the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance. KFOR continues to focus on eradicating the threat posed by cluster bomb units and on clearing border crossing sites, and hopes to mark all areas and clear as many as possible before the onset of the first snow. As at 22 October, 6,130 anti-personnel mines, 3,481 anti-tank mines and 7,408 bomblets had been cleared. Residual caches of weapons continue to be discovered and confiscated throughout the area of operation. KFOR began the destruction of confiscated weapons on 15 October.

Until 30 November, KFOR will accept the voluntary handing in of all weapons and military ordnance by the local population.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. Since demilitarization on 21 September, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA(UÇK)) has ceased to exist. The Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), which came into being at that time, will be a multi-ethnic civil emergency agency, with no law enforcement role, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. KPC is under the day-to-day operational direction and supervision of KFOR and is currently in a 60-day transition phase, to be completed by 21 November. Progress to date has been hampered by inadequate funding for the training and operation of the new Corps.

7. During the reporting period, Serb security forces continued to comply with the terms of the military-technical agreement and in general remain cooperative in their dealings with KFOR. Seasonal military training by the Serb forces continues and this has, on some occasions, brought elements of their forces close to the ground safety zone. On the night of 25/26 October, a minor incident occurred when three Yugoslav Army soldiers, apparently lost, entered Kosovo in the Multinational Brigade (West) area. They were detained for the night, before being returned to the Yugoslav Army on 26 October. A formal protest was sent to the staff of the Yugoslav Army.

Cooperation with international organizations

8. KFOR continues to provide humanitarian assistance throughout Kosovo on a daily basis, focusing on transportation, food distribution and the protection and escort of refugees and internally displaced persons. KFOR is assisting the United Nations winterization emergency team so as better to coordinate common activities. In this respect, an exercise was held on 20 October, which simulated KFOR emergency support to the population, pursuant to request from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. KFOR has also been working to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid by building a bypass at the Deneral-Jankovic border crossing. Work on the bypass is almost complete.

9. With the police force of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) numbering 1,747 at the end of October, civil administration in the area of public security remains principally a KFOR responsibility. KFOR provides soldiers for joint patrols with the UNMIK police and, as noted above, also continues to patrol in all major urban areas and in the countryside in order to deter crime and instil a sense of personal safety in civilians. KFOR provides daily support to the Kosovo Police School whose first intake of 173 students graduated on 16 October. The next class will start on 22 November.

10. KFOR continues to provide 24-hour control and monitoring on the authorized border-crossing points with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,[1] and provides security for the transportation to Pristina of the customs duties collected at the border. Routine border-monitoring operations,

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

including random searches of vehicles, continue, in accordance with the approach of KFOR to targeting illegal border activity. KFOR will continue to attach high priority to monitoring cross-border movements into Kosovo.

11. KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels of the civil administration in Kosovo and is represented in the Kosovo Transitional Council (KTC) and the joint civil commissions. KTC continues to meet, but has been boycotted by the Serbs in protest against the establishment of KPC, which they consider is not multi-ethnic.

12. With respect to infrastructure, KFOR troops are still involved in such tasks as sanitation, securing water supplies and power plant operations. Rail transportation has resumed, operated and maintained by KFOR with funds from the trust fund of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Government of Japan. Pristina airport was opened to commercial traffic on 15 October. Commercial flights, which had been suspended on 20 October, resumed on 28 October.

Return of refugees and displaced persons

13. Almost 90 per cent of some 900,000 refugees in regional and third countries have now returned to Kosovo. During the month of September, 10,000 refugee returns were organized, 700 from the Balkans and the rest from third countries. The Serbs in Kosovo, however, remain largely isolated and dependent on aid provided by humanitarian organizations and KFOR for food delivery and medical care.

Outlook

14. There has been no significant change in the security situation in Kosovo since the most recent report. Attacks against ethnic minorities, especially Kosovar Serbs, remain a concern, and the potential exists for tension in areas such as Mitrovica and Orahovac to escalate and spread. KFOR will continue to work in close cooperation with UNMIK to address these and other issues in order to maintain peace and stability.